
From: SCHOOL FINANCE [INBOX]
Sent: Thursday, September 04, 2008 3:46 PM
Subject: STaR Team SAIS Bulletin No. 6 (FY09)
Attachments: GE-20 - Absences versus Minutes.pdf

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Arizona Department of Education
System Training and Response (STaR) Team
<http://www.ade.az.gov/schoolfinance/star>

STaR Team Bulletin No. 6 (FY09) – ADE Guideline GE–20
Thursday, September 4, 2008

Due to an Attorney General's opinion regarding ADE Guideline GE–20 "Absence Reporting Requirement," State Superintendent Horne has announced that ADE will be revising GE–20. (See pages 2 and 3.) The STaR Team is unable to provide any guidance as to reporting procedures and/or absence calculations for students in grades 9 – 12, students enrolled in alternative programs pursuant to A.R.S. § 15–796 and homebound students until the revision of GE–20 is complete.

The STaR Team Absence Calculator Workbook and Absence Calculator Users Guide (available for download at <http://www.ade.az.gov/schoolfinance/star/>) have been revised to remove worksheets and associated directions for calculating absences for students enrolled in grades 9 – 12. The use and functionality of the worksheets for students in grades 9 – 12, formerly included in the STaR Team Absence Calculator Workbook, are dependent upon the reporting requirements outlined in GE–20 and therefore should not be used until revisions to GE–20 and any associated procedures are clarified.

The System Training and Response Team will provide appropriate information and assistance once revisions to GE–20 and any associated procedures are completed and approved for distribution.

ADE Guideline GE–20 affected no change to requirements for calculating and reporting absences for non–TAPBI, non–Homebound students enrolled in grades KG – 8. The STaR Team Absence Calculator worksheets used to calculate absences for students enrolled in grades KG – 8 have been developed in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes and ADE guidance. The "Workbook" remains a viable tool for calculating absences for students enrolled in grades KG – 8.

Whenever you have immediate need for assistance with specific issues related to SAIS, please visit our web site at <http://www.ade.az.gov/schoolfinance/star/> and click on "Request for SAIS Training and Assistance."



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents; Business Managers and Charter Holders

FROM: Superintendent Tom Horne

DATE: September 2, 2008

Re: Guideline GE-20 – Absences versus Minutes

The Attorney General's office has upheld the opinion of a private attorney indicating that the new guideline GE-20 was not consistent with statute. We will be revising GE-20 accordingly.

When this office prepares guidelines, it relies heavily on the Attorney General's office with respect to all legal issues. When GE-20 was being prepared, in July 2006, we obtained the following informal advice, by means of email, from the Attorney General's office.

1. May ADE require schools to report absences? Yes. ARS 15-902(J) requires absences to be made a part of the attendance record. ADE currently allows schools to report attendance through SAIS in either minutes OR absences. An unintended consequence of allowing schools to take attendance in minutes has been that absences have dropped significantly. ADE wants to require schools to report absences – even if they report attendance in minutes. This is permissible under the current statutes.
2. Can ADE require schools to have 60 minutes of instructional time for ¼ ADM students? Yes. ADE's audit unit has discovered that many schools report a student as ¼ ADM when the student attends ONE 50 minute class where no passing time is required. ARS 15-901(A) (2) (a) (ii) requires ADM to be prorated for part-time high school students in increments of ¼, ½ or ¾. ARS 15-901 (A) (6) (3) defines 'daily attendance' for ¼ ADM for each 60 minutes of instructional time in a subject that counts toward graduation. Based on the findings of ADE's audit unit, ADE wants to hold schools harmless for prior

years when ¼ ADM students were only in class for 50 minutes. ADE wants to require schools to add additional seat time for those students to comply with statute. Statute allows ADE to require schools to add time for these students. (Emphasis added.)

We understand that the Attorney General's office is not bound by informal emailed advice. On reviewing this in a more formal manner, they have come to a different conclusion. The use of informal opinions is necessary for the Department to be able to do its work in the regular course of business on a timely basis. I want people to be aware that in preparing GE-20, the Department did not act unilaterally, but had informal concurrence from the Attorney General's office.